REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated April 26, 2007 ("Present Action"). Claims 1 to 93 stand cancelled. No amendments have been made to Claims 94 to 114.

A Petition for a Five-Month Extension of Time to respond to the Office Action is submitted herewith. Please debit Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for the cost of this Extension of Time and any fees due in connection with this Response.

In the present patent application, an Office Action was mailed on April 28, 2006 ("Prior Action A"). On August 28, 2006, Applicants submitted a Response to Prior Action A ("Prior Response A") with a One-Month Extension of Time.

Another Office Action was mailed on November 3, 2006 ("Prior Action B"). Prior Action B stated that: (a) Prior Response A did not address support for the subject matter defined by Claims 94 to 114; and (b) Prior Response A did not point out how the language of such claims distinguishes them from the referenced relied upon in Prior Action A. On January 3, 2007, Applicants submitted a Response to Prior Action B ("Prior Response B") with a One-Month Extension of Time.

In reply to Applicants' Prior Response B, the Present Action asserts that Prior Response B presents a general allegation of patentability and no arguments regarding either error of obviousness holding or specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes over applied references in obviousness holding. Accordingly, this Response more fully addresses these issues.

Additionally, a Notice of Abandonment was mailed on April 26, 2007. The Notice of Abandonment stated that the reply received January 3, 2007 does not correct the deficiencies stated in cited Notice (of November 3, 2006), thus it cannot be deemed to be a bona fide attempt to advance prosecution and inadvertence as stated in 37 CFR 1.135(c) no longer exists, therefore, the examiner is without authority to postpone decision as to abandonment of this application per MPEP 714.03.

Applicants respectfully submit that this Notice of Abandonment is improper. Applicants submit that with the Five-Month Extension of Time submitted herewith,

Applicants have until May 3, 2007 to Respond to Prior Action B (mailed on November 3, 2006). The Present Action acknowledges this time period by stating:

> Since the submission is not a bona fide attempt to provide a complete reply to the prior Notice and since there is sufficient time remaining for Applicant's reply to be filed within the time period for reply to the prior Notice (or within any extension pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a)), Applicant is notified that the omission must be supplied within the time period for replay (no additional time from prior action is granted). However, Applicant may extend prior time period from prior Notice pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this Notice of Abandonment be withdrawn.

Regarding the Present Action's assertion that Prior Response B presents a general allegation of patentability and no arguments regarding either error of obviousness holding or specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes over applied references in obviousness holding, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 94 to 114 are in condition for allowance for at least the following reasons.

Prior Action A rejected:

> (a) now canceled Claims 1-24, 38-69, 71 and 82-93 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,683,082 to Takemoto et al. ("Takemoto 082") or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Takemoto 082 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,628,685 to Takemoto et al. ("Takemoto 685");
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> (b) now canceled Claims 25-37, 70 and 72-81 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Takemoto 082, or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Takemoto 082 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,179,517 to Sarbin et al. ("Sarbin"), or, in the alternative, as being unpatentable over Takemoto 082 in view of Takemoto 685 and further in view of Sarbin;

(c) now canceled Claims 1-19, 22-24, 38, 44-45, 51-52, 58-59, 65-69 and 82-93 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Takemoto 685;

(d) now canceled Claims 20-21, 39-43, 46-50, 53-57 and 60-64 as being unpatentable over Takemoto 685 in view of Takemoto 082; and

(e) now canceled Claims 25-37, 70 and 72-81 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takemoto 685 in view of Sarbin.

Takemoto 082 discloses a gaming system including a plurality of gaming machines. Each gaming machine of Takemoto 082 is provided with a game memory which stores various game programs and a game controller for executing a program read from the game memory in response to a game selection command. Takemoto 082 discloses a centralized controller with a degree-of-difficulty adjustment section responsive to a game condition signal from each game controller for adjusting the degree of difficulty in playing a game executed by the game controller and a gaming machine termination controller for determining whether or not each gaming machine is to be terminated.

Column 8 of Takemoto 082 specifically discloses:

> The card inlet/outlet 29, which is used to receive and dispense a prepaid card used in place of cash or to dispense an adjustment card, is connected to the card processor 5a (not shown in FIG. 3) provided in the gaming machine. The card processor 5a has a magnetic card drive having read and write functions, for example; it reads the amount data recorded on a magnetic card input through the card inlet/outlet 29 and sends it to the game controller 14 at the appropriate time. At the time of adjustment, it has a function of writing data of the remaining amount, the number of finally won pinballs, etc., onto the card and then dispensing the card.
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> The card processor 5a contains a magnetic card stack section (not shown) for holding a plurality of magnetic cards and a card dispensing mechanism (not shown). If a game is started with only cash or gaming medals input without a magnetic card, at the time of adjustment the data of the remaining amount, the number of finally won pinballs, etc., can be written onto one of the magnetic cards held in the stack section and the card then dispensed.

> The card processor 5a allows not only magnetic cards, but also receipts or the like on which data is visually recorded, to be used as input/output media. For example, a card processor may be used which uses magnetic cards only as card-like recording media for inputting amount data and receipts or the like on which data is printed, or for outputting data of the number of finally won pinballs. Also, a card processor may be used which uses recyclable cards on which characters, etc., can be represented and erased as a result of a temperature change (cards proposed by the applicant in Japanese Patent Application No. Hei 3-260879) as card-like recording media.

Column 14 of Takemoto 082 specifically discloses:

> FIG. 14 shows the adjustment process. In the adjustment process, the game controller 14 adds the game remaining amount to the input remaining amount at step 140 and sets the game remaining amount to the initial value 0 at step 141. Further, the game controller 14 causes the card processor 5a to register (magnetically record or print) the input remaining amount after the addition, and the score, on a predetermined card (if the player inputs a card in place of cash, on that card; if the player does not input a card, on a card held in the card stack section of the card processor 5a) at step 142, sets the input remaining amount and the total score to the initial values 0 at step 143, and causes the card processor 5a to dispense the card through the card inlet/outlet 29 at step 144. Lastly, the game controller 14 informs the centralized controller 50 that adjustment has been made at step 145. At this time, data of the total score, the adjustment time, the time for which the gaming machine 1 was occupied, etc., may be sent to the centralized controller 50. At the time of adjustment, a system charge may be collected from the score or input remaining amount.
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> The embodiment allows the player to exchange the dispensed card for a prize or to input the card to another gaming machine 1 for again playing a game.

Accordingly, Takemoto 082 does not disclose at least one instruction executable by a processor to enable the processor to access, over a network, player-specific information stored in a data storage device. Takemoto 082 also does not disclose at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause a thermal energy director to cause a human-readable symbol to be produced and viewable on a received data card, the human-readable symbol indicating at least a portion of the player-specific information.

Takemoto 685 discloses a game play media lending machine which includes an operation section which calculates based on the number of game play media read from a recording medium (C) and a predetermined lending unit price of a game play medium, a lending equivalent amount which is an amount of money required to receive dispensing of as many game play media as the number read from the recording medium from a game play media lending machine. The operation section of Takemoto 685 also calculates a conversion amount that can be used for a player to borrow game play media based on the calculated lending equivalent amount and an exchange rate preset to collect a game play charge in proportion to the number of game play media won by the player.

Column 7 of Takemoto 685 specifically discloses:

> The card C has, as areas for indicating the number of game play media, an area C1 containing digits indicating the number and an area C2 containing a bar code indicating the number and, as areas for recording remaining amount information indicating the remaining amount to be adjusted at the time of game end, an area C3 containing digits indicating the amount and an area C4 containing a bar code indicating the number, as shown in FIG. 1; these indication entries can be rewritten.
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> The game play media lending machine 20 is a device for paying out game play media equivalent to the amount inserted by a player. As shown in FIG. 4, it comprises a bill validator 22 for determining the validity of bills inserted from the outside, a read section 25 and a write section 26 for reading and writing information from and onto a card C when the card C is inserted, a card stacker 27 for taking in, holding, and supplying cards C, a remaining amount display 30 for indicating the remaining amount of the input amount, an amount selection switch 31 for accepting selection of an amount for a player to borrow game play media from the gaming house, within the input amount, an adjustment switch 32 for accepting an instruction of adjusting the remaining amount, etc., at the time of game end, a counting section 34 functioning as a dispensing mechanism for counting the number of game play media to be lent and dispensing them, and a controller 40 for transferring information to and from the components and controlling them. These are provided in a machine body 20a or on the front thereof.
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> ...

> The game play media lending machine 20 is formed with a card inlet and outlet 24a below the bill slot 21 for taking a card C issued by the game play media counter 12 into the machine body 20a. Placed in the inside of the machine body 20a from the card inlet and outlet 24a is a card reader/writer 24 which has the read section 25 for reading the game play result information and remaining amount information recorded on the inserted card, the write section 26 for newly writing the number of game play media, the remaining amount information, and other necessary items onto one of the cards taken into the machine body 20a, and the card stacker 27 for stacking and storing the cards taken into the machine body 20a. The read section 25 comprises a scanner, for example, for reading bar codes. On the other hand, the write section 26 comprises a thermal head, for example, for thermally writing and erasing bar codes, etc., for recording them

Accordingly, Takemoto 685 does not disclose at least one instruction executable by a processor to enable the processor to access, over a network, player-specific information stored in a data storage device. Takemoto 685 also does not disclose at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause a thermal energy director to cause a human-readable symbol to be produced and viewable on a received data card, the human-readable symbol indicating at least a portion of the player-specific information.

Sarbin discloses a portable data unit having a data memory and a microprocessor for physically transporting data representing player play data including credit and win data along with gaming machine operation data between a number of gaming machines and a central data system where the data memory contains data indicating whether a player is entitled to play incentives.

Columns 6 and 7 of Sarbin specifically disclose:

> One of the more significant features of the invention is a comprehensive player tracking capability. As the player operates the machine, data representing game play is transmitted by the interface unit to the memory 90 of the card 20. For example, the identification of the machine being played is stored in a data field 104 as shown in FIG. 5. In the preferred embodiment of the invention the identification of the last ten machines 10 played are stored in fields 104. In addition, specific information relating to the games played is also stored in card memory 90. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 5, eight data fields indicated

> generally at 106 are provided to store information relating to player activity. Here, there is one field 106 for each denomination: nickel, dime, quarter, half-dollar, dollar, $5, $25 and $100. Within each field 106 there is a group of subfields for storing the number of: coins played 108, coins paid out 110 the number of games played 112 and the number of coins paid by attendants 114 for each denomination. Also, the time of play in minutes for that denomination is stored in a subfield 116. It will be understood, of course, that the amount and types of data stored in the game play fields such as 106 of memory 90 can be varied to suit a particular casino operating environment. In addition to the play data discussed above the memory 90 contains a data field 118 to store information relating to the jackpots or other major prizes won by the players.

Column 8 of Sarbin specifically discloses:

> A related feature of the interface unit 40 is the ability to provide information on the display 78 in addition to the player's debit or credit balance. For example, using the data stored in memory 90, the processor 46 can display the player's name in a personalized welcoming message along with other player specific information such as any bonuses or prizes he may be entitled to as indicated in data field 102.

Accordingly, Sarbin does not disclose a thermal energy supplier supported by a housing. Sarbin also does not disclose a thermal energy director coupled to the thermal energy supplier, the thermal energy director operable to direct thermal energy toward a received data card. Moreover, Sarbin does not disclose at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause a thermal energy director to cause a human-readable symbol to be produced and viewable on a received data card, the human-readable symbol indicating at least a portion of the player-specific information.

In Prior Response A, Applicants canceled Claims 1 to 93 and submitted new independent Claims 94, 102 and 109.

Independent Claim 94, as submitted in Prior Response A, is directed to a gaming device including, amongst other elements, a thermal energy supplier supported by a housing and a thermal energy director coupled to the thermal energy supplier, the thermal energy director operable to direct thermal energy toward a received data card. The gaming device of independent Claim 94 also includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to: (a) enable the processor to access, over a network, player-specific information stored in a data storage device, and (b) cause the thermal

energy director to cause a human-readable symbol to be produced and viewable on the received data card, the human-readable symbol indicating at least a portion of the player-specific information.

Independent Claim 102, as submitted in Prior Response A, is directed to a gaming device including, amongst other elements, a thermal energy supplier supported by a housing and a thermal energy director coupled to the thermal energy supplier, the thermal energy director operable to direct thermal energy toward a received data card. The gaming device of independent Claim 102 also includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to: (a) enable the processor to access, over a network, player-specific information stored in a data storage device, the player specific information including data associated with at least one player profile, (b) cause the data writer to change machine-readable data stored by the data card after a designated event occurs, and (c) cause the thermal energy director to cause a human-readable symbol to be produced and viewable on the received data card after a designated event occurs, the human-readable symbol indicating at least a portion of the player-specific information.

Applicants respectfully submit that neither Takemoto 082, Takemoto 685 or Sarbin individually, nor the gaming device resulting from the combination of Takemoto 082, Takemoto 685 and Sarbin discloses, teaches or suggests at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause a thermal energy director to cause a human-readable symbol to be produced and viewable on a received data card, the human-readable symbol indicating at least a portion of the player-specific information. Unlike Takemoto 082, Takemoto 685 and Sarbin individually and the gaming device resulting from the combination of Takemoto 082, Takemoto 685 and Sarbin, the gaming devices of Independent Claims 94 and 102 each include at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause a thermal energy director to cause a human-readable symbol to be produced and viewable on a received data card, the human-readable symbol indicating at least a portion of the player-specific information.

Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have no apparent reason to combine the elements of Takemoto 082, Takemoto

heat to be directed toward the data card to cause human-readable graphics to be produced and viewable on the received data card after a designated event occurs, the human-readable graphics indicating: (i) at least a portion of the data associated with the player profile, and (ii) at least a portion of the machine-readable data stored by the data card.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 94, 102 and 109 are patentably distinguished over Takemoto 082, Takemoto 685 and Sarbin and in condition for allowance.

Claims 95 to 101, 103 to 108 and 110 to 114 depend or indirectly from independent Claims 94, 102 and 109 and are also allowable for the reasons given with respect to Claims 94, 102 and 109, and because of the additional features recited in these claims.

Moreover, the Notice of Abandonment asserts that the stated support of Fig. 11, page 39, 52 and 53 in Prior Response B does not address all steps/features in form as presently claimed. Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that the Specification and Drawings (and specifically the parts of the Specification reproduced in Prior Response B) expressly provide support for the subject matter of Claims 94 to 114. The Examiner is encouraged to read these sections again. If the Examiner believes that any specific element in Claims 94 to 114 is not fully supported by the Specification, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned. Moreover, if the Examiner requires an element-by-element listing of where support for each claimed element is located in the Specification, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for allowance, and such allowance is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions related to this Response, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

685 and Sarbin to form a gaming device and then modify this formed gaming device by arbitrarily adding the element of at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause a thermal energy director to cause a human-readable symbol to be produced and viewable on a received data card, the human-readable symbol indicating at least a portion of the player-specific information. Such a combination with an element not disclosed in any of these references would reasonably be construed as improper hindsight reconstruction.

Similar to the gaming devices of Independent Claims 94 and 102, Independent Claim 109, as submitted in the Prior Response A, is directed to a method for programming a gaming device including, amongst other elements, writing a plurality of computer-readable instructions which are executable by one or more processors to: (d) cause heat to be directed toward the data card to cause human-readable graphics to be produced and viewable on the received data card after a designated event occurs, the human-readable graphics indicating: (i) at least a portion of the data associated with the player profile, and (ii) at least a portion of the machine-readable data stored by the data card.

Applicants respectfully submit that neither Takemoto 082, Takemoto 685 or Sarbin individually, nor the method for programming a gaming device resulting from the combination of Takemoto 082, Takemoto 685 and Sarbin discloses, teaches or suggests writing a plurality of computer-readable instructions which are executable by one or more processors to: (d) cause heat to be directed toward the data card to cause human-readable graphics to be produced and viewable on the received data card after a designated event occurs, the human-readable graphics indicating: (i) at least a portion of the data associated with the player profile, and (ii) at least a portion of the machine-readable data stored by the data card. Unlike Takemoto 082, Takemoto 685 and Sarbin individually and the method for programming a gaming device resulting from the combination of Takemoto 082, Takemoto 685 and Sarbin, the method of programming a gaming device of Independent Claim 109 includes writing a plurality of computer-readable instructions which are executable by one or more processors to: (d) cause

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY _____

Holby M. Abern
Reg. No. 47,372
Cust. No. 29159

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